

Page 3 HEARING re Adversary proceeding: 22-01139-mg Celsius Network Limited et al v. Stone et al Conference Using Zoom for Government. (Doc## 83 to 85) Transcribed by: Sonya Ledanski Hyde

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Page 6 1 PROCEEDINGS 2 CLERK: All right, starting recording for March 15th, 2023 at 3 PM. Case Number 22-1139, Celsius Network 3 Limited et al versus Stone et al. Mr. Roche, if you could 4 5 unmute and give your appearance, please. 6 MR. ROCHE: Yes, Kyle Roche, on behalf of 7 defendants, Jason Stone and KeyFi Inc. 8 CLERK: All right, thank you. You can pause the 9 recording. All right. Mr. Chapman, if you could unmute and 10 give your appearance, please. Sorry, you're -- I can't hear 11 you. 12 MR. CHAPMAN: Dean Chapman of Akin Gump Strauss 13 Hauer Feld for the Celsius plaintiffs. 14 CLERK: All right. Thank you. All right, Miss 15 Steadman, are you going to be speaking this afternoon? 16 MS. STEADMAN: I will not be speaking, thank you. 17 CLERK: Thank you. All right. Is Mr. Hurley 18 going to be joining? 19 MR. CHAPMAN: Yeah, he'll be on. 20 CLERK: Okay, great, thanks. All right. You can 21 pause the recording. He just joined, yeah, his audio just 22 went through. Mr. Hershey, if you could give your 23 appearance, please. 24 MR. HERSEY: Of course, Samuel Hershey from White 25 and Case on behalf of the official committee of unsecured

Pg 7 of 36 Page 7 1 creditors. 2 CLERK: All right. Thank you. Mr. Hurley. MR. HURLEY: Mitch Hurley with Akin Gump Strauss 3 Hauer & Feld, special litigation counsel to the Celsius 4 5 plaintiffs. 6 CLERK: All right. Thank you. Those are all the 7 appearances I have, Judge. 8 THE COURT: Okay. All right. Thank you very 9 much. All right. Mr. Roche, I think you were the one who 10 requested this conference. Go ahead. 11 MR. ROCHE: Yes, Your Honor. So as I'm sure Your 12 Honor is aware, there's been extreme market volatility over 13 the course of the past few weeks. The TRO that Your Honor 14 ordered after the preliminary injunction hearing and that the parties negotiated and agreed after a few weeks, 15 16 requires -- and that will remain in effect while the 17 parties see if they can resolve this dispute in this stay, it requires if the defendants, KeyFi, want to make a 18 19 transaction or alter a position for the following process: 20 1) For us to first issue a request to Celsius, 2) For us to 21 meet and refer on that request if Celsius objects, and then 22 if the parties can't resolve the request or the scope of the 23 request after they've met and conferred then that's why

we're here today. The third part of the process is for us

to come before you to see -- to have Your Honor resolve it.

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This process has prejudiced, significantly prejudiced the defendant's ability to manage their positions while the stay is in effect because it makes it difficult for, if not impossible, for the defendants to react to market conditions as they arise. And that's why we've requested two of the three requests, one of which is the, the subject of this, this hearing.

Essentially, we're asking for the flexibility for up -- for the defendants to manage their positions up to 100 Ethereum worth of value to ensure that they can both maximize the yield they are gaining on their positions, while also ensuring that none of their positions get liquidated. To make it -- to give a sort of an example, if one position has a relatively healthy loan to value ratio and another position is getting dangerously close to liquidation, the request simply states that there's a preapproval for KeyFi to borrow against the healthy position and pay back the loan on the unhealthy position given the fluctuation and value of the relative assets.

After two meet and confers, Celsius has refused this request. I understand their position to be -- Mr. Hurley, correct me if this doesn't accurately capture it -- that essentially KeyFi does not need that much Ethereum to manage their positions. But given the market volatility, KeyFi does maintain that it needs that flexibility. And you

Page 9 1 know what we're -- I'm struggling to understand is, you 2 know, why Celsius is objecting to this position? Because at 3 the end of the day, none of the value is leaving the wallet. We're reporting on the wallet every couple of weeks. We're 4 5 working with them to give them the data they asked for. And 6 if there is a liquidation or if there is prejudice to the 7 KeyFi wallets as a result of the market volatility, it's not 8 going to harm just KeyFi, assuming the plaintiffs do 9 prevail, which we maintain, we don't believe they will. But if they do, that value -- any prejudice to that value in 10 11 those wallets would ultimately affect the estate. 12 THE COURT: Mr. Roche, what's the approximate 13 value of 100 Ethereum in dollars? 14 MR. ROCHE: It fluctuates day to day. I believe 15 it's -- right now I believe Ethereum is a little over 1500. 16 So roughly \$150,000. I think, I'm look, I'm looking it up. 17 It may be \$160,000. It's the Ethereum -- yep. So it would 18 be \$165,000 because the price of Ethereum right now is about 19 1650. 20 THE COURT: Could, could you tell me, since the 21 TRO became effective, what the value of the portfolio that's 22 protected by the TRO is? 23 MR. ROCHE: Yes. It's -- so there's a few assets that I think are difficult to value --24 25 THE COURT: Yeah, there's some liquid assets.

Pg 10 of 36 Page 10 1 understand. But give me the approximate value and I will 2 ask Mr. Hurley the same thing. MR. ROCHE: It's approximately, I think, a little 3 over \$3 million. I think between 3 and \$3.5 million and it 4 5 obviously, again, fluctuates daily, but that's the 6 approximate value. THE COURT: Okay. Anything you want to add before 7 8 I turn to Mr. Hurley? 9 MR. ROCHE: That's, that's it for now. 10 THE COURT: Okay. Mr. Hurley. 11 MR. HURLEY: Good afternoon, Your Honor. Mitch 12 Hurley at Akin Gump on behalf of Celsius. So I just want to 13 make a couple of things very clear, Your Honor. When Mr. 14 Stone presented request, pursued to Paragraph 3 of the TRO 15 to us on March 4th, he made three requests. One was whether 16 Celsius and the UCC would agree to allow him to convert a 17 million tokens, called Looks, into Eth, so that that Eth would be available in liquid form to allow Mr. Stone to 18 19 manage collateral issues with respect to the loans he's 20 taken against NFT. So, for instance, if he thinks a loan is 21 in jeopardy, he could use that Eth to pay down a part of the 22 loan so that the LTV would be improved. We actually agreed to that request. And Mr. Stone has, we understand, 23 liquidated the million Looks for approximately 100 Eth. 24

he has that liquidity now.

He also asked whether we would agree to allow him to put certain identified NFTs up for sale. And we agreed to that. The request that we did not agree to was for him, in addition to getting the 100 Eth by selling the Looks, to go out and do additional borrowings against, if you will, healthier NFTs so that he could use the proceeds of those borrowings to pay down on loans --

THE COURT: Change loan-to-value ratio to avoid liquidation.

MR. HURLEY: Correct. And we did meet and confer in advance of this, Your Honor, and we asked for an explanation as to why it would be that Mr. Stone would need more than 100 Eth of liquidity to ensure that he doesn't wind up in a position where you get a liquidation of a loan. And the only answer we got was that Mr. Stone thinks that it's, in his judgment, better to have 200 Eth than 100 Eth. There was no specificity about what it is that he needed for the additional liquidity. And so that's, that's really why we refused.

Certainly, you know, there is a choice between continuing to, of course, hold these NFTs, which are a very volatile asset. And the strategy that Mr. Stone appears to be taking is sort of betting that NFTs are going to increase in value going forward. While we have been willing to provide him with some rope for that, Your Honor, in terms of

like this request to liquidate the million Looks and turn it into Eth so that these loans he's concerned about won't result in liquidation, we -- neither we nor the UCC was comfortable consenting to the additional, the additional borrowings, which takes us, you know, a step further.

I also need to point out here, Your Honor, that it does appear that Mr. Stone engaged in already in a transaction that is forbidden under the TRO unless he first gets our consent or an order from the Court. So we consented to liquidating the 100 Eth -- sorry, the million Looks into approximately 100 Eth. He did that. He used some of the proceeds of the conversion to pay down a loan on a platform called Drops. Again, I think more or less consistent with the agreement and with our consent. But then he took the collateral that was freed up from that pay down of the Drops loan and used it to take out another loan on a different platform called JPEG. That JPEG loan produced something like 40 P-Eth which is the JPEG wrapped Eth, equivalent of an Eth. And, you know, instead of using the Eth that he was able to get through that borrowing for the liquidity, he actually then put the P-Eth on curve to earn additional interest.

So it appears to us that part of what Mr. Roche is seeking here is basically kind of an expo facto blessing from this Court for something that Mr. Stone already has

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done. We don't want there to be any suggestion that by not mentioning that he appears to have engaged in this transaction already, we're waiving any of Celsius's rights with respect to him having done that. Nor that we consent to any kind of further borrowing, as opposed to what we did consent to, which is the million Looks.

THE COURT: Okay. Let me ask a couple more questions. When I asked Mr. Stone the approximate value of the portfolio, he gave us 3 million to 3.5 million range.

And I realize some of what's held is liquid and maybe hard to value on a day-to-day or week-to-week basis, whatever.

But since this litigation began, do you have a view, Mr.

Hurley, whether the value of the portfolio now that's subject to the TRO has increased or decreased in overall value?

MR. HURLEY: So, Your Honor, Celsius is working with an expert to evaluate a number of things related to this litigation, including the value of the portfolio. I don't want to give a --

THE COURT: I'm not going to hold, I'm not going to hold you to the hard and fast numbers, but directionally, can you tell me whether, in your view, the value has increased or decreased?

MR. HURLEY: So I think the easiest way to answer that is to say that what Mr. Stone's strategy has been

effectively, has been to borrow against NFTs and use the
borrowings to invest them in a variety of, if you will, like
interest bearing activities and those activities, I believe
have generated some income, exactly how much is difficult to
say, at least for me. And then whether that results in a
net improvement of the portfolio in turn depends in part, of
course, on the value of the NFTs, which is harder to
determine. I will say, and I just want to make this very
clear, I think Your Honor started that question to Mr. Roche
with referring to the portfolio that's subject to the
TRO. Celsius believes, we certainly submit that the TRO
extends far beyond just the)X50DD wallet into any assets
that are traceable back to the Celsius wallet and the
proceeds of those wallets. And part of what we're trying to
do now is identify what all of those assets are. And then
with respect to the OX50DD wallet itself, our preliminary
view is that the assets in that wallet, setting aside
whatever revenue creating activities he's engaged in, just
the assets themselves, are probably materially in excess of
the \$3.5 million number. Exactly how much more, again,
difficult to say, but we think probably in the, you know,
low seven figures additional range. So maybe we're talking
5 or \$6 million instead of 3.5. That's not value generated,
Your Honor, since the TRO was entered. We're just talking
about our efforts to try to put a value on assets that were

1 in there to begin with.

THE COURT: Okay. Well, I'm -- Mr. Roche, it's very hard for me without written papers, you know, affidavits, declarations, something under oath to really provide you with a ruling on what you're asking for. The reason I was asking, and it may just not be feasible because of, you know, valuing illiquid assets is a very difficult task and with the NFTs, I gather they are harder to value. What I was exploring, and this may not be feasible, is putting a collar around Mr. Stone's ability to, you know, exchange positions, whether it's borrowing or whatever it is, such that the floor of the value of the portfolio remains at a particular level. But that just may not be feasible given the difficulty in in valuing.

I certainly understood when you were negotiating the terms of the original TRO that's in place that you emphasized the importance for Mr. Stone of being able to, you know, protect himself from the loan-to-value ratio on, you know, getting liquidated out because he couldn't meet calls. And I, and I think the TRO fairly provided some flexibility. Yes, you had to go to Mr. Hurley, you had to go to Celsius to seek approval. I'm not going to get into now, and I don't want to hear a response, to whether you agree or disagree that Mr. Stone may have taken action that wasn't permitted by the TRO. That's not before me today.

That would have to be on, you know, a proper showing with declarations, et cetera. I don't want to get into that.

But I don't know, I mean, you know, frankly, Mr. Roche, it sounds to me that the debtor has been reasonably accommodating in trying to give Mr. Stone some flexibility in taking action. I understand that market volatility may require a decision now rather than tomorrow in order, you know, to prevent market movements to affect his position.

So I don't know, Mr. Hurley, whether you and Mr. Roche have discussed trying to put a collar around, you know, giving Mr. Stone more flexibility if value remains within a particular collar because I certainly understand the last thing that Celsius wants is to see, if it ultimately prevails or you can't -- I'm still hoping you're all going to get to a settlement, but we'll come to that in a minute. But, you know, assuming that, that Celsius prevails, I don't want to find out that what it is they prevailed on is worth 25 percent less today than it was at the time of the TRO. But, you know, I don't follow the values. I just happenstance periodically look at Ethereum and Bitcoin, but I don't look at all these others and have no idea what, how, how they're valued. And I know for a while, Bitcoin and Ethereum were increasing in value. I haven't looked this week. So I don't know what's happened, you know, in light of two bank failures and whether that's

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had an impact or not.

Mr. Hurley, is there an approach that would allow you to try and negotiate some kind of collar that would give Mr. Stone more flexibility to react promptly but within limits that would protect Celsius?

MR. HURLEY: Well, Your Honor, with respect to the current request, you know, my expectation after we and the UCC agreed to the conversion of the million Looks into 100 Eth, I guess what I thought was going to happen was that the defendants would say, ok, you know, we'll come back to you if we think we really need more than this.

THE COURT: Right.

MR. HURLEY: And my understanding is that there still is a substantial portion of the Eth, that they, that they converted the Looks into available as liquidity.

Certainly, we, on behalf of Celsius, would be open to it if there was a further request made and an explanation about why additional borrowings are necessary. I can't guarantee that we would agree. But, you know, our belief and really our intention in agreeing to the conversion of the Looks was to give them breathing room and to come back to us if they really thought there was something that was needed in addition to that.

MR. ROCHE: So, look, I understand Mr. Hurley's position -- but just for -- it's 91 Eth, not 100 Eth, but

that's the current amount of room that the parties have That was request number one. The additional 100 agreed to. Eth, look, there is -- there have been times over the past month while this TRO has been in place where KeyFi and Mr. Stone put their own personal funds in given how quickly the market changed and the market has been incredibly volatile in the start of this year. And the concern that has been expressed to me is that over the course of the next week, two weeks, month, two months, while this stay is in place and while the TRO is pending, that the market could jump, very, very quickly. And for whatever reason this is -- the times this has happened where we've had a heartache of liquid -- we're in danger of liquidation, it's typically over the weekend. I don't know why that phenomena has occurred in the crypto markets, but that is why, you know, we've agreed to 91 Eth.

We're essentially asking, you know, I think Your Honor's idea on some form of collar where there would be some sort of tolerance on moving positions within that collar is -- I like that idea. I don't know exactly at the moment how to formulate that. But we're, we're asking, we're asking for this Court instead of the 91 Eth buffer for us to have the 191 Eth buffer so that we can avoid a situation in there's a loss of value to the portfolio. We may not. The only reason we would use that is if there's

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either an opportunity to earn more yield on a particular position or one position is in danger of liquidation. That really is at the end of the day where the spirit of this request is.

MR. HURLEY: May I make a suggestion?

THE COURT: Go ahead, Mr. Hurley, yeah, go ahead.

MR. HURLEY: We are we have a meet confer scheduled later this afternoon on some other matters with Mr. Roche. Maybe with the exchange of some additional information about exactly what they think they need and why, we might be able to come back to Your Honor with an agreement rather than with a dispute. And we wouldn't insist on, for instance, you know, an additional notice and objection and meet and confer period before coming back to Your Honor if that becomes necessary. So given that opportunity, we may be able to resolve this part based on what I've heard.

THE COURT: Look, I'm not, Mr. Roche, given that it's contested, I'm not prepared to rule without actually seeing papers and, you know, declarations under oath that fully lay down the positions of each of you. You know when I just raised the collar notion, what I'm trying to think is whether, you know, at the end of the day, assuming Celsius prevails, they're not going to want to find out -- they're not going to want positions that they would otherwise

prevail having been liquidated because there was, you know, the loan-to-value ratio went bad and the position got liquidated. Okay? So that's not in Celsius' interest either. I think you actually hear that (indiscernible).

Okay?

meet and confer scheduled this afternoon, see if you can work it out. If you can't and you want to press the request, you're going to have to put something in writing and you're going to have to put in a sworn statement from Mr. Stone supporting what you're explaining. You're going well beyond my understanding of crypto when you start talking about Look, which I never heard of until you raised it for the first time during this call. And I'm sure there's lots of other forms of crypto that I've never heard of, or of NFTs and stuff like that.

So it's hard for me to make a reasoned decision based on what I've been told. You know, Mr. Roche, yes, well, I say I'm sympathetic of Mr. Stone's arguments. He doesn't want a position liquidated because he can't move, exchange, look for Ethereum and be able to use that to satisfy a call because the loan-to-value ratio is preventing liquidation. I'm sympathetic to that argument and to some extent, maybe I misunderstand. Mr. Hurley, frankly, if Celsius prevails, it doesn't want the value of the portfolio

Pg 21 of 36 Page 21 -- of this portion of the portfolio substantially declining in value because Mr. Stone couldn't meet a, you know, a margin call. Go ahead, Mr. Hurley. MR. HURLEY: It's certainly true that we don't want the portfolio to decline in value. I think there are differences in opinion about the wisdom of continuing to throw good money after NFTs, if you will. THE COURT: Yes, right. MR. HURLEY: So that's really, I think, the issue. THE COURT: Let me switch the subject a minute. Are you making any progress in trying to settle this? MR. ROCHE: Well, that's what the meet and confer at four o'clock is. We have, I think both parties have retained, at least I understand from Mr. Hurley, that they've retained somebody to do an accounting. We are also in the process of performing that accounting. We have a call at four to hopefully put together a path for transparency on both sides on how to value this property, how to value the tracing of the transactions. And, you know, I think we're going to see at the end of this period, 60-day period, whether or not the parties can get clarity on whether a resolution is possible without trial. THE COURT: Look, the faster that you try to get

this to a resolution, the more flexibility each of you are

going to have, you know?

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So for today, I just can't, I'm not going to rule one way or the other, Mr. Stone -- or Mr. Roche, on the issue you're raising today. Meet and confer. If you're going to press this, I'm willing to hear it and decide it, but you're going to have to give me some papers and I'm going to require some declarations from each side under oath so I fully understand where people have under oath said, here's what the facts are. This is why we're doing it. So I'll try, you know you've never had any problem getting a quick hearing from me and you won't. Okay? That's where, that's where we're going to have to end it for today.

MR. ROCHE: Understood.

THE COURT: Okay. All right. But look, I suggested this idea of a collar. That may be a total bad idea. But there may be some other solution where Celsius is prepared to provide within bounds, to provide some greater flexibility as long as there's transparency about what it's being used for. But I'm going to leave that to you to talk about.

MR. HURLEY: Your Honor. Do you have time for me to just comment briefly on the settlement process or do you need to go?

THE COURT: No, go ahead, go ahead briefly.

MR. HURLEY: So I just want to make sure that the Court understands part of what this process is about. And

Mr. Roche and I talked about this in the past. So it, you know, it's undisputed, as I think the Court is aware, that there were a very substantial number of coins, especially Eth, that were provided by Celsius and Mr. Stone and that were not returned and haven't yet been accounted for. Set aside whose responsibility accounting is for the moment. And a huge part of what we're trying to do through this process is understand the fate of those coins because, you know, we're talking about coins worth \$100 million or more. And so it's going to be critical for Celsius, on behalf of the estates, to make sure that we have confidence in the fate of those coins. If the coins were lost through poor investments, that's one thing. If there is another explanation for what happened to those coins, that could result in a very different path. And so a big part of what we're doing, and I think Mr. Roche and I have been working on disclosures related to this, is to try to get to an answer to that question as well as some tracing questions and some more sort of like classic accounting questions. So that's really what's going on. The process is starting. But so far, you know, I think we're both hopeful that it will be productive. THE COURT: All right. I don't want to get into any more details. Mr. Roche, if you feel you need to respond to what Mr. Hurley said, you can. But the one thing

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Page 24 1 I try not to do is get involved in settlement talks. 2 There's no question that from the outset, you know, some of the issues you raised, Mr. Roche, were about an accounting. 3 And Mr. Hurley raised were about accounting. So I think 4 5 each side understanding exactly what happened, whether, you 6 know, I won't repeat what Mr. Hurley said, but where it was 7 value lost through investments versus where did the stuff go 8 is obviously important. So keep going. Like I say, I'm 9 willing on a proper showing, which is more than a call, I 10 hadn't even seen a letter that explained exactly what I was 11 going to be hearing about today. I'm certainly prepared to 12 go ahead and decide if I have to. I think you're all better 13 off to see if you can work something out that may make 14 neither of you entirely happy but is the best solution going 15 forward. Okay? 16 MR. HURLEY Understood. 17 MR. ROCHE: Thank you. Thanks very much, both of you. Okay. 18 THE COURT: 19 (Whereupon these proceedings were concluded at 20 3:31 PM) 21 22 23 24 25

Page 25 1 CERTIFICATION 2 3 I, Sonya Ledanski Hyde, certified that the foregoing 4 transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. 5 6 Sonya M. deslarski Hyd-7 Sonya Ledanski Hyde 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 Veritext Legal Solutions 21 330 Old Country Road 22 Suite 300 23 Mineola, NY 11501 24 25 Date: April 7, 2023

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